



March 15, 2021

Oregon State Legislature  
House Committee on Human Services  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: House Bill 2348 – Plant-based meals**

Chair Williams and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

On behalf of Oregon's 62 community hospitals and the patients they serve, the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) is opposed to HB 2348 which requires hospitals to provide plant-based, or vegan, options, pending final amendments.

Hospitals comply with extensive food and dietary regulations under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, as well as accreditation entities such as the Joint Commission. Under these regulations, hospitals are required to have qualified dietitians, who are trained in the science of nutrition, to supervise the nutritional aspects of patient care. These professionals monitor and assign diets for patient needs, often times this includes comfort foods for people recovering from injuries or surgeries.

Hospital dietitians are required to develop menu options that meet the nutritional needs of patients in accordance with recognized dietary practices, such as the US Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Center or the Institute of Medicine Food and Nutrition Board's Dietary Reference Intakes. Hospitals are also required under the Joint Commission to accommodate a patient special diet or cultural, religious, or ethnic food preferences, unless contraindicated by a medical provider.

At a time when hospitals are continuing to respond to COVID-19, HB 2348 is not needed and will place an undue burden on hospital infrastructure. We are unclear as to what problem the proponents of the bill are trying to address. According to their own map of hospitals, our members already provide this option. Instead of solving a problem, HB 2348 has the potential to increase food waste and labor costs which contradict our collective goals to reduce health care costs. OAHHS opposes HB 2348.

Sincerely,

Travis Meuwissen  
Director of Advocacy  
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems